

Identity and Anarchy, Part 1

When you look in a mirror, what do you see? A person. An individual. Male or female? What skin, and hair color? Do these identity markers matter?

What do you do when you want to be seen as an individual, but significant components of the world not only *refuse* to see you as an individual, but instead lump you in with some sort of outgroup? And many portions of the world either want that out group dead, or at least abolished in some capacity?

What is an anarchist to do?

There's strength in numbers... Do I live to fight another day, and perhaps use that time to spread the ideals of anarchy by willingly wearing that outgroup identity, at least if the world will see me couched in it anyway?

Or do I say "no, I am solely an individual" and get bulldozed by the onslaught that is coming because I look like somebody who belongs to this outgroup?

What I've been thinking a lot of about lately is this concept of identity. And I've got like... a dozen half-written posts trying to explore my own thoughts, and figure out exactly how I want to present what I'm effectively trying to say. Maybe they'll get finished, but maybe they won't. I don't know. But maybe I can attempt here to at least cut to the chase.

We have 2 kinds of identity – one chosen, and one not chosen. A non-chosen, or involuntary identity marker could be something biological – like race, gender, or sexual orientation. A chosen identity is one which is inherently voluntary, and willingly placed upon your own shoulders, and claimed as your own *by you*. Perhaps a religious identity, or a political affiliation.

For me, here are a few of my involuntary (but no less accepted as real and valid) identity markers, or identities: Straight, Western-European descent, male. Here are some of my voluntary identity markers or individual identities: Anarchist (too many hyphens to count at this point), Philosopher, Skeptic, Heathen, 49ers fan, Foodie, Wine and Beer Connoisseur, etc.

Of the two identities, is one more important than the other? To the classical liberal in me, I have always said "yes." My chosen identities are far more important to me. For the most part, I still find this to be true. I am my choices, ultimately. I like to think that the things I've pondered about, wrestled with, and agreed to have more weight to them than those identities I was born with.

As I said, I still find this to be true, but there is a difference now.

We currently live in an age where *everything* is up for question, even our very biological makeup. People can be transgendered, or transracial, or so we're told. Our genitals don't define our gender (I disagree, but that's beside the point), our skin color doesn't indicate or give hints to our race, and sexual orientation is on a spectrum of... well... the sky's the limit, apparently. Again, I don't personally believe this nonsense, but that's the western world at this point.

And if everything is up for question, then it all needs answering too, and those things we thought are inherent identity markers – race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. — need affirmation. And maybe try to get more information on getting help in fighting those atrocities. I am being asked to identify with a characteristic about myself that I have known is inherent in me, as if I need to agree with what I has been forced on me, as if I had a choice to deny it, or something.

I can't stress enough how much I disagree with this notion, but I do think that in this day and age, perhaps it is important to publicly proclaim it, however.

And not only are we constantly bombarded with this social justice notion that all of this is nurture and not nature, those of us who have certain identity markers are being told these are inherently bad.

White? Bad. Heterosexual? Bigoted. Male? Sexist.

Well... fuck.

And we all know there are various groups who are banding together to fight *anything* that can be misconstrued as “problematic,” whether or not those particular identity markers are as important to you as they are to them.

We live in a time where recognizing the “inherentness” of your biological gender, race, and sexual orientation is as much a political statement as it is a scientific one.

Which is patently absurd, but the battle lines are being drawn on these grounds.

Which means I can no longer say “I am a straight, white, male,” and it be purely a biological statement of fact. Against some types of people, these are now fighting words, words of opinion, and are up for debate.

Or destruction.

So what do you do? If you reaffirm one of these new “political” identities, you are somebody who needs to be eradicated. But if you view these identity markers as biological,

then it is absurd to think you can “choose” to be anything other than what you are. As Lady Gaga once said (in the 1950’s apparently) “I was born this way.” It used to be that to question somebody’s identity was “offensive.” Remember when people questioned if homosexuality was a choice or it was inherent? And homosexual people rightly were offended at the notion that they would choose a life as difficult as the one they experienced? Remember that?

Now, apparently, it is *all* a choice, and if you choose the wrong ones, you are deemed an outcast – or a sexist, misogynistic, racist. Granted, it wouldn’t be a problem if it were just a few wackos telling you that being white, or male was “wrong,” but it is no longer just a few wackos. It’s still wackos, but powerful ones. It’s governments. Countries. Entire communities of people are dedicated to hating you if you are the wrong gender, or the wrong race, or any other “wrong” identity. I know my readers know precisely what I am talking about, too. If you’ve watched even *one* lame social justice warrior cringe video by some marginally successful YouTuber, you know what I am talking about.

If you follow me on Twitter or my personal account on Facebook, you may have noticed an increase in seemingly random questions and polls recently, as I try to wrap my brain around the implications of these events.

As an anarchist, I would normally say something like “ya... try being an anarchist. Everybody hates you. The individual is the most oppressed minority there is.” And this is true.

But nobody is trying to outbreed anarchists.

Nobody is looking to tear down “Anarchist culture and society.” There are no laws (yet...) that limit the free political speech of anarchists. Anarchist symbols aren’t equated with racism. There are no “anarchist allies” who appear in lame rap videos to critique “fellow” anarchists about some ridiculous social justice idea, yet come to find out are actually on the opposite side yelling “Ya! Take THAT, you Anarchists! Your ideas are problematic and oppress other political minorities!” There aren’t significantly large quantities of Twitter users using the hashtag “kill all anarchists.” There are no political “minority” groups saying that displaying any of the various anarchist flags is “offensive.” This isn’t happening.

But there are groups and ideologies that are diametrically opposed to men. The legal system in almost all western countries, especially as it relates to family law, are so biased in favor of women that many cases see abusive mothers with a plethora of destructive behaviors get custody of their children over a father who is present, stable, and loving. Certain kinds of crime reflect the same mentality.

How many times have we heard of women getting off with a slap on the wrist after raping a boy, sometimes repeatedly over the course of multiple years?

What and you think this is relegated only to the legal system?

It's societal.

How many times have you seen a ridiculous *BuzzFeed* or *Huffington Post* article lambast the sexual objectification of women, and then the same writer will have a different article titled "The top 10 sexiest abs in Hollywood," or "the best bulges on Twitter," or something equally ridiculous? We've all seen instances of this, have we not?

Anarchist men – what do you think of this? Is this ridiculous to you? Perhaps you feel it is a hypocritical double standard? But as an anarchist, are you allowed to feel that way? Or do you not care, one way or the other?

Anarchist men – as anarchists, do you identify, or relate to, your fellow man better than women? If so, why? Does it have anything at all to do with the fact that you both have a penis (at least presumably – again, 2017 – I just never know anymore)? Or is it something more intrinsic than that? Shared male experience, maybe? Or perhaps it's just the fact that being male presents certain opportunities, certain experiences, certain life situations, pitfalls, successes and failures that only other males will understand? And if you identify with males better than females, does that make you a "male supremacist?" Or a misogynist? If not, why not? Ever think about it?

If you're an anarchist, are you allowed to feel kinship to other men over women? Isn't this "group think" or a variation of "herd mentality?" Are you allowed to identify as a male, with being male, and living as a male? Doesn't the individual identity come first?

If you weren't already... I hope I've got you thinking.

Next time, I plan on going further down the rabbit hole. Stay with me.